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described in Ps. 35 : 12, 13. (f) They are an expression of outraged justice, forbearance having ceased to be a virtue ; they express that feeling common to all ages, that the wicked deserve punishment. Do not many Christians of to-day *pray* that the convicted murderer may not escape hanging? (g) They are intended for dark days, days when the wicked are in power, when resentment becomes "the holiest of instincts."

#### STUDY XVI.—DAVID'S PSALMS—THIRD PERIOD.

- Remarks :** 1. Is there not danger, after all, that we shall expend all our energy in seeking for traces of historical connection between a given Psalm and the events which perhaps furnished the occasion of its origin, and forget what is of greater importance, the great teachings which the Psalm was intended to convey at the time of its writing, and during all time?
2. In carrying out the plan of the "Inductive Bible Studies," those who prepare them find difficulties of various sorts. Not the least among these is that of compressing into the space allotted the material that seems to demand admission. Necessarily *much* must be omitted. Perhaps, as it is, the "studies" have been made too comprehensive. We can only repeat what was said in connection with the third "study."
3. The "studies" are intended for students of all classes. Among those who make use of them there will be differences in natural capacity for work, in opportunities for study. Results will vary according to circumstances. One policy, however, must rule, whatever the circumstances: *Only as much of the work outlined should be undertaken as can be mastered in the time one has to devote to it.* Omit one-half, if necessary three-fourths, but *learn* the remainder.
4. The student has by this time learned that he is expected to do *work for himself*. Is not this, after all, the more satisfactory and profitable method?

##### *First Step : Psalms relating to Absalom's Rebellion.*

Read carefully the Psalms connected with Absalom's rebellion, in the following order : (1) 63, written in the wilderness during the flight before the passage of the Jordan ; (2) 3 ; 4, morning and evening hymns, after passing the Jordan ; (3) 26 ; 62, which perhaps refer to the traitors who deserted him ; (4) 23 ; compare v. 5 with 2 Sam. 17 : 27-29 ; (4) 27 ; 28, during his exile at Mahanaim ; (5) 69 ; 109 (doubtful), which have been thought to refer to Ahithophel's treachery ;—making notes under the following heads :

- 1) Expressions which indicate an eager desire for the privileges of the sanctuary.
- 2) Trust in God, that he will continue to help.
- 3) Assurance that in the end he will be delivered.
- 4) Internal evidence in favor of the Davidic authorship of any or all of these Psalms.

##### *Second Step : Psalm 23, Special expressions, and figures.*

Take up exhaustively Psalm 23, and treat as follows :

1. Read the Psalm and mark every expression which seems to need explanation, and with such helps as are within reach determine its force ; e. g., (v. 1) "*my shepherd*," "*I shall not want*," (v. 2) "*still waters*," better "*waters of refreshment*," (v. 3) "*restoreth my soul*" (cf. 19 : 7), "*paths of righteousness*," "*for his name's sake*," "*valley of the shadow of death*," better "*valley of deep darkness*," "*thy rod and thy staff*," (v. 5) "*preparest a table*" (2 Sam. 17 : 17-29),

"in presence of mine enemies," "anointed my head with oil," "cup runneth over;" (v. 6) "goodness and mercy," "will dwell in the house of the Lord," better "I shall return to dwell," etc.; "forever."

2. Read vs. 1-4, and make an effort to interpret the language in strict accord with the figure; determine whether there is a single expression which cannot be taken literally as if uttered by a sheep, (e. g., (a) "thou restorest my soul" = "thou dost revive, quicken me," the words *my soul* being often used in the sense of *my life*, or even *myself*, *me*; (b) "paths of righteousness," etymologically *paths of straightness* (paths that are not crooked and difficult); (c) "for his name's sake" = "for the sake of the shepherd's reputation;" (d) "valley of deep darkness" = the dark ravines through which a Palestinian shepherd must often lead his flock), and note the influence of David's early shepherd life upon the diction.
3. Read vs. 5, 6, studying closely the second figure employed, that of a *host*, and compare with the narrative in 2 Sam. 17: 27-29.

*Third Step: Psalm 23, parallelism, logical connection.*

1. Study the parallelism and strophic organization of the Psalm according to the following translation and division:\*

"Jehovah is | my shepherd | I cannot want.

In pastures | of green grass | He causeth me to lie down;

Unto waters | of refreshment | He leadeth me;

Myself | he restoreth | —

"He guideth me | in paths | of righteousness | for His name's sake;

Also | when I walk | in the valley | of dense darkness,

I fear not | evil, | for thou art | with me;

Thy rod | and Thy staff | they | comfort me.

"He prepareth | before me | a table | in the presence | of my adversaries;

Has he anointed | with oil | my head, | my cup | is abundance;

Surely goodness | and mercy | pursue me | all the days | of my life,

And I shall return | to dwell in the house | of Jehovah | for length | of days."

[This presentation is three-fold: (1) three strophes each of four lines; (2) the parallelism of the members; (3) the measurement, viz.: *first* strophe, three measures or tones; *second*, four measures; *third*, five measures.]

2. (a) Note the difference between Professor Briggs' translation and that of the R. V.; (b) determine the meaning and particular force of each line, as above presented; (c) determine the logical connection between each line and that which precedes and follows it; (d) determine the general force of each of the three strophes and the relation which they sustain to each other.

*Fourth Step: Psalm 23, Theme, date and teaching.*

1. Discover the theme of the Psalm and make an analysis upon the basis of this theme.
2. Consider the three views which are maintained as to the time in David's life at which this Psalm was composed; viz.: (1) when he was a youth shepherding his father's flocks; (2) when he was fleeing from Absalom; (3) when old and ready to die, he looks back upon his life fraught with so many dangers;—and produce reasons for and against each.

\* By Prof. C. A. Briggs, in "Biblical Study," pp. 282, 283. It is given here because the old translation has become so familiar to all readers as to have lost its force in many particulars.

3. Note carefully the teachings of the Psalm under the following heads : (1) God's care manifested towards those who are in his keeping ; (2) The situation of men as a result of this care.

*Fifth Step : Special treatment of the Psalms.*

Upon this or a similar model take up and work out other Psalms of this period, e. g., 3 ; 4 ; 27 or 69.

*Sixth Step : The Messianic Element in the Psalms.*

**The Messianic Idea in the Psalms.\*** (1) Note in Psalms 2 ; 20 ; 21 ; 45 ; 72 ; 110 ; the various representations of the Messiah as *King*. (2) Note in Pss. 22 ; 69, the expressions which refer to the Messiah as a *prophet and sufferer*. (3) Note in Ps. 110 the representation of the Messiah as a *priest*. (4) In what sense may these Psalms have been true of David or the original speaker, and yet, at the same time, true of the Messiah? (5) Granting that Ps. 40 : 7-9 (Heb. 10 : 5-7) is Messianic, it is possible for vs. 10-12 of the same Psalm to be so interpreted? Why not? Inference to be drawn to the this? (6) In the same way, (a) Ps. 41 : 9, according to John 13 : 18, refers to the Messiah ; but (b) is the first half of this verse quoted by Christ ; and (c) would v. 10 be possible in the Messiah's mouth? (7) On the ground of these passages formulate two or three principles in accordance with which the Messianic application of the various Psalms seems to be regulated.†

\* Consult various commentaries, especially Perowne, on the individual Psalms ; introduction to Perowne's commentary, pp. 41-54 ; Briggs' "Messianic Prophecy," pp. 60-63.

† See Gardiner's "Old and New Testaments in their Mutual Relations." Lects. viii.-xii. New York : James Pott & Co.